

# FOVA

## Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research

A coalition of national organizations  
committed to quality care for  
America's veterans

### Executive Committee

#### John M. Bradley, III

Veterans Service Organizations  
Liaison

703-244-3652

john\_m.bradley@comcast.net

#### Gary Ewart

American Thoracic Society

202-296-9770

gewart@thoracic.org

#### Allison Haupt

Alliance for Academic  
Internal Medicine

202-861-9351

ahaupt@im.org

#### Heather Kelly, Ph.D.

American Psychological  
Association

202-336-5932

hkelly@apa.org

#### Matthew Shick

Association of American  
Medical Colleges

202-828-0525

mshick@aamc.org

#### Barbara West

National Association of Veterans'  
Research and Education Foundations

301-656-5005

bwest@navref.org

[www.friendsofva.org](http://www.friendsofva.org)

November 30, 2007

The Honorable David R. Obey  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the 83 member organizations that are the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA), thank you for your steadfast support for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and of the welfare of our nation's veterans. Your leadership culminated in a fiscal year (FY) 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations conference report containing \$480 million for VA's Medical and Prosthetic Research Program. This vital funding would sustain a key means to advance the standard of care, not only for veterans but for all Americans. We are grateful for that remarkable gain.

Unfortunately, an unrelated political stalemate delays this support from materializing. As a result, VA research is currently operating at a funding level *actually lower than* its FY 2006 spending level. The current continuing resolution (P.L. 110-116) funds VA health care at a rate equal to that proposed by the President for FY 2008. For FY 2008, the Administration proposed only \$411 million for VA research – \$1 million less than the FY 2006 appropriated level. As you know, Congress provided \$413.7 million for VA research in the FY 2007 continuing resolution plus an additional \$32.5 million under the FY 2007 emergency supplemental, thus increasing total research funding in FY 2007 to over \$446 million. Now, that program must reduce its annualized rate of spending by 7.9 percent.

These overarching budgetary decisions, unrelated to VA itself, severely disrupt the management of VA research. As one of the nation's premier research programs, VA requires timely and predictable funding to meet current commitments and allow for innovative scientific advances. Funding with arbitrary fits and starts impedes important VA research on national priorities, including studies in post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, amputations, poly-trauma, burns, and many other health conditions long prevalent in the veteran population. Furthermore, when available research awards decline as a function of budgetary policy, the VA risks losing physician-researchers and other clinical investigators who are integral to providing direct care for our nation's veterans and for sustaining its quality.

Without further delay, FOVA encourages Congress to work with the Administration to enact the conferenced "Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2008" (H.R. 2642, S. 1645).

Sincerely,

The FOVA Executive Committee and the FY 2008 FOVA membership

# FOVA

Administrators of Internal Medicine  
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine  
Alliance for Aging Research  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Society of Pain Medicine  
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases  
American Association of Anatomists  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine  
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of Spinal Cord Injury Nurses  
American Association of Spinal Cord Injury Psychologists and Social Workers  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Dental Education Association  
American Federation for Medical Research  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Heart Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Lung Association  
American Military Retirees Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Optometric Association  
American Paraplegia Society  
American Physiological Society  
American Podiatric Medical Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics  
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Thoracic Society  
Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International  
Association of Academic Health Centers  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Professors of Medicine  
Association of Program Directors in Internal Medicine  
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry  
Association of Specialty Professors  
Association of VA Chiefs of Medicine  
Association of VA Nurse Anesthetists  
Blinded Veterans Association  
Clerkship Directors in Internal Medicine  
Coalition for American Trauma Care  
Coalition for Health Services Research  
Digestive Disease National Coalition  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Digestive Disease National Coalition  
Disabled American Veterans  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Gerontological Society of America  
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America  
Legion of Valor of the USA, Inc.  
Medicine-Pediatrics Program Directors Association  
Military Officers Association of America  
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Uniformed Services  
National Association of VA Dermatologists  
National Association of VA Physicians and Dentists  
National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations  
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs  
Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation  
Pain Care Coalition  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Research!America  
Society for Investigative Dermatology  
Society for Neuroscience  
Society for Women's Health Research  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
The American Pain Foundation  
The Endocrine Society  
The FAIR Foundation  
United Spinal Association  
Veterans Affairs Physician Assistant Association  
Vietnam Veterans of America